

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05
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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1035

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 3833

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (OMISSIONS)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: LAST CONVERSATION WITH BHUTTO

1. BHUTTO RETURNED TO RAWALPINDI FROM LAHORE YESTERDAY AND GAVE A FAREWELL DINNER LAST NIGHT FOR MRS. BYROADE AND MYSELF. HE ALSO ASKED THAT I COME ALONE TO SEE HIM 1-1/2 HOURS EARLY. OUR CONVERSATION IN FACT RAN ABOUT TWO HOURS AND IT IS WITH SOME SE SE OF FRUSTRATION THAT AFTER ALL THAT EXPOSURE TO HIM PERSONALLY, I STILL FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO SUPPLEMENT OUR REGULAR REPORTING ON THE SITUATION HERE TO ANY SIGNIFICANT DEGREE.

2. ALTHOUGH BHUTTO NEVER GIVES FAREWELL DINNERS FOR DEPARTING AMBASSADORS, I ATTACH NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE, AS FAR AS U.S. RELATIONS ARE CONCERNED, THAT HE DID SO FOR ME, IT FOLLOWS HIS SENSE OF THE FITNESS OF THINGS, AS THE FOUR OF US HAVE BEEN ON VERY CLOSE TERMS, AND IT WAS ALSO A SIGNAL THAT THINGS GO ON AS NORMAL IN THESE ABNORMAL TIMES. HE PERSONALLY CHANGED THE GUEST LIST RATHER LATE IN THE DAY TO ADD GENERALS TIKKA KHAN AND ZIA OF ARMY, WHICH WAS SOMEWHAT A RELIEF TO ME. MY CLOSE FRIEND YUSUF BUCH, HIS ERSTWHILE SPECIAL ASSISTANT AND CONFIDENT, WAS KNOCKED OFF AS A SIGN OF HIS CURRENT DISFAVOR. OTHER
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THAN THAT IT WAS THE NORMAL DINNER BUT I THOUGH IT WAS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND HIS WIFE WERE ALSO PRESENT.

3. WHEN BHUTTO AND I WERE ALONE HE TALKED FREELY, AND YET IN SPITE OF THIS WE NEVER REALLY GOT INTO ANY REALLY MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS AS TO JUST WHAT WILL HAPPEN HERE NEXT OR WHAT ALTERNATIVES HE SEES OPEN TO HIM. I FOUND IT DEPRESSING THAT A CONSIDERABLE

PORTION OF OUR TIME WAS SPENT UPON DISCUSSION OF CHARGES AND COUNTER CHARGES AS TO WHAT ROLE THE U.S. WAS PLAYING IN THE CURRENT INTERNAL POLITICAL TURMOIL IN PAKISTAN. I AM REPORTING THIS SEPARATELY AS IT COULD PORTEND DIFFICULTIES WE MAY FACE HERE AFHSR MY DEPARTURE TOMORROW MORNING. (IF I GET OUT AS STRIKES MAY CLOSE THE AIRFIELDS*)

4) THE DINNER WAS A RATHER SAD OCCASION WITH UNCHARACTERISTIC LONG GAPS IN CONVERSATCMN IN A SETTING THAT IS NORMALLY SPARK-LING WITH WIT AND CANDOR. NEVERTHELESS, BHUTTO CARRIED OFF THE EVENING WELL AND AT TIMES WAS HIS OLD SELF. MY NET CONCLUSION FOR THE EVENING IS THAT BHUTTO IS PLAYING HIS HAND OUT AND FEELS THAT HE HAS DONE ABOUT ALL HE CAN DO TO GET THINGS BACK UNDER CONTROL. I WOULD ALSO SAY HE REALIZES HE HAS LOST CONTROL OF THE SITUATION AT LEAST TO THE POINT THAT HE IS NOT CERTAIN OF JUST HOW THINGS WILL DEVELOP IN THE SHORT TERM. HE IS ALSO A VERY FRUSTRATED MAN. HE BELIEVES THAT HE HAS DONE A LOT FOR PAKISTAN, THAT HE HAS DONE MORE THAN ANYONE HAS EVER DONE FOR THE WELFARE OF THE MASSES OF THE PROPLE IN PAKISTAN, AND HE BELIEVES THAT HE STILL HAS A MAJORITY OF THESE MASSES BEHIND HIM REGARDLESS OF THE TROUBLE THE OPPOSITION CAN CAUSE IN THE STREETS. HE FINDS HIMSELF IN A WORLD OF UNREALITY, WHEREIN A MOTTLEY AND GENERALLY LEADERLESS GROUPING OF OPPOSITION COULD HAVE PRODUCED REAL CHALLENGE TO HIS CONTROL. TWICE IN HIS REMARKS AT THE DINNER TABLE BHUTTO SPOKE IN HISTORICAL TERMS ALMOST AS IF HE WERE ALREADY OUT. ONCE HE SAID THIS WAS THE LAST STRUGGLE OF THE OBSCURANTISTS, I.E., OF THE CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS RIGHTIST ELEMENT. HE WAXED ELOQUENT OF THE TYPE OF OPPOSITION HE COULD GIVE THIS COUNTRY AND THE GREAT CHANGES THAT COULD COME WHEN HE
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RETURNED TO POWER. THIS WAS IN CONTRAST TO MANY OTHER REMARKS IN WHICH HE MADE IT APPEAR THAT BUSINESS WAS GOING ON AS USUAL. THE EXPERTS MAY FIND IT INTERESTING THAT HE REVEALED AT THE DINNER TABLE, IN THE PRESENCE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL BAKHTIAR, THAT HE HAD NOT KNOYN OF BAKHTIAR'S SIGNIFICANT PROPOSAL ABOUT REHOLDING PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS UNTIL BAKHTIAR HAD MADE IT PUBLIC. THE CHIEF JUSTICE OBSERVED, IN THE PRESENCE OF EVERYONE AT THE DINNER, THAT HE THOUGHT BAKHTIAR'S GOING PUBLIC ON THE FORMULA WHICH DREW IMMEDIATE REJECTION FROM THE OPPOSITION AND THEN LATER THE SUPPORT OF BHUTTO WAS JUST ABOUT THE CLUMSIEST WAY IMAGINABLE TO HAVE HANDLED THINGS.

5. THE MOST TELLING AND SADENING OCCASION OF THE EVENING WAS BHUTTO'S EXPRESSION AS I RESPONDED TO HIS WARM AND ELOQUENT, AND VERY PERSONAL, TOAST. I HAVE NEVER SEEN BHUTTO BEFORE WITH A LOOK OF UTTER DEJECTION, NOR HAVE I EVER SEEN HIM BEFORE WITH TEARS IN HIS EYES.

6. I REALIZE THIS MESSAGE IS NOTHING BUT ATMOSPHERICS, BUT

THINK EVEN THAT MAY BE INTERESTING IN VIEW OF THE UNPREDICT-
ABLE SITUATION WE FIND HERE AT THE MOMENT.
BYROADE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 19-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK, US, (BYROADE, HENRY A), (BHUTTO, ALI)
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